



AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: April 7, 2015

Item Number: G-2

To: Honorable Mayor & City Council

From: William R. Crouch, AIA, NCARB, AICP, LEED (AP), Urban Designer

Subject: TWO RESOLUTIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BEVERLY HILLS DESIGNATING TWO PROPERTIES AS LOCAL LANDMARKS AND PLACING THESE PROPERTIES ON THE LOCAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PROPERTIES. THE COUNCIL WILL ALSO CONSIDER ADOPTION OF A CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION, PURSUANT TO THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT.

- Attachments:**
1. Criteria for Designating Local Landmarks
 2. Resolution Designating the Kronish Residence at 9439 Sunset Boulevard as a Local Landmark
 3. Resolution Designating the Celluloid Monument at the intersection of Olympic Boulevard, South Beverly Drive and Beverwil Drive as a Local Landmark
 4. Cultural Heritage Commission Report and Resolution Recommending Landmark Designation (Kronish Residence)
 5. Cultural Heritage Commission Report and Resolution Recommending Landmark Designation (Celluloid Monument)

RECOMMENDATION

That the City Council, on the recommendation of the Cultural Heritage Commission and with property owner support, adopt Resolutions designating (1) the Kronish Residence, 9439 Sunset Boulevard (privately owned); and (2) Celluloid Monument, at the intersection of Olympic Boulevard, South Beverly Drive and Beverwil Drive (City owned), as Local Landmarks, and add the properties to the Local Register of Historic Places.

INTRODUCTION

Currently there are twenty-seven (27) properties in Beverly Hills recognized as Landmarks listed on the Local Register of Historic Properties. The Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) recommended that the City Council designate two additional historic properties as local historic landmarks in accordance with the City of Beverly Hills Historic Preservation Ordinance. Listing these properties on the City's Register of Historic Properties would recognize them as important to the history of the City and would enable the property owners to be eligible for current and future incentives offered to local landmarks, including application for a Mills Act contract for property tax relief. Designating these properties as Local Landmarks would also ensure protection of the resource by requiring City review of any significant future work done to any of the properties, including renovations, additions, and any potential demolition.

BACKGROUND

The City's Historic Preservation Ordinance enables the City Council to designate local Landmarks. Two historic properties have undergone the process for review of documentation by the City's historic consultant and have been deemed eligible as local landmarks. The property owners of the Kronish Residence support bringing this property to the City Council for designation as a local Landmark, and the Celluloid Monument artwork and site are owned by the City. Resolutions attached to this report (Attachments 2 & 3) would designate the following properties as local Landmarks:

1. Kronish Residence (1954) - 9439 Sunset Boulevard

Located at the end of a long driveway off the north side of Sunset Boulevard, the single-family residence was designed by the noted Modernist architect Richard J. Neutra for Herbert Kronish and his family in 1954. At approximately 7,000 square feet, the recently rehabilitated house was among the largest of Neutra's completed projects, one of only three Neutra-designed dwellings to be erected in Beverly Hills, and the only one that remains intact. The house reflects Neutra's unique amalgamation of International Style tenets with the Biorealist design philosophy that he had advanced in the mid-1950s. The overall composition is of a sprawling, low-slung villa of glass and stucco set amidst a subtropical forest.



Historic Photo Source:
Neutra Foundation at neutra.org

2. Celluloid Monument (1960) - intersection of Olympic Boulevard, South Beverly Drive and Beverwil Drive

The commemorative monument, designed by noted sculptor Merrell Gage and dedicated on March 8, 1960, consists of a 22-foot black marble and bronze sculpture set atop a round concrete pad surrounded by a flowerbed. It sits on a raised triangular shaped island median at the intersection of three major streets – Olympic Boulevard, South Beverly and Beverwil Drives. The towering sculpture is tiered with a square black marble base topped by a black marble octagonal center portion upon which a five-foot tall bronze figure in relief is attached to each of the eight sides. The figures depicted are individuals associated with the motion picture industry who worked for the preservation of Beverly Hills as a separate municipality, including Tom Mix, Harold Lloyd, Fred Niblo, Rudolf Valentino, Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, Will Rogers, and Conrad Nagel.



DISCUSSION

The Cultural Heritage Commission (CHC) initiated nomination proceedings for these two properties on October 8, 2014 and requested a landmark assessment report be prepared in each case to determine if the properties met the City's criteria for designation as local Landmarks based on the criteria provided in Attachment 1 and summarized in the chart beginning on page 4.

On January 14, 2015, the Cultural Heritage Commission considered Landmark Assessment Reports prepared by the City’s historic consultant, Jan Ostashay of Ostashay & Associates Consulting, for the two properties along with other evidence, and recommended that the City Council designate the properties as local Landmarks and include them on the City’s Register of Historic Places.

Summary of Local Landmark Criteria Eligibility

Criterion	Kronish Residence	Celluloid Monument
<p>A.1 Is identified with important events in the main currents of national, state, or local history, or directly exemplifies or manifests significant contributions to the broad social, political, cultural, economic, recreational, or architectural history of the Nation, State, City, or community</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>The Kronish Residence was one of master architect Richard Neutra’s largest residential commissions of the postwar period. Within Beverly Hills, the Kronish Residence is the only Neutra-designed dwelling remaining in the city, the other two having since been demolished. As a result of the high quality and precision of the dwelling’s recent rehabilitation – particularly of its exterior elevations – the house is a significant contributor to the modernist architectural history of the City.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>The monument is an important marker honoring eight members of the motion picture industry who were identified as leaders in Beverly Hills’ successful 1923 battle against annexation by the City of Los Angeles. The campaign to produce and fund the sculpture was coordinated by a committee of leading local citizens, including silent film stars and monument honorees Harold Lloyd and Mary Pickford, and led by chairman Corinne Griffith. Ms. Griffith was a former movie star, author, and Beverly Hills businesswoman whose charismatic leadership resulted in the realization of the monument that was dedicated in 1960 on a triangular median at a major intersection in the City. The sculpture was the work of renowned artist Merrell Gage, who had previously designed the sculpture at the top of the much-loved electric fountain within Beverly Gardens Park.</p> <p>The monument itself directly exemplifies the significant contributions of these individuals to the broad political history of the City of Beverly Hills. It has also come to symbolize an important time in the community’s history and is a physical reminder of the enduring contributions valued by the generation that erected the monument.</p>
<p>A.2 The property is directly associated with the lives of Significant Persons important to national, state, or local history</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">No</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">No</p>

Criterion	Kronish Residence	Celluloid Monument
<p>A.3 Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>The Kronish Residence – superb in composition, elegant in style – fully embodies Richard Neutra’s modernist architectural style as applied to a sizeable dwelling in Beverly Hills. The house incorporates the key design features associated with the International Style: a horizontal profile, primarily flat roof, open floor plan, broad expanses of glazing, and absence of applied ornamentation. It also exemplifies Neutra’s philosophy of Biorealism as articulated in the abundance of floor-to-ceiling fixed and sliding glass windows, use of luxurious natural materials and finishes, and the embrace of nature as revealed in the glass-enclosed garden visible from public areas of the house. In addition, the house incorporates Neutra’s trademark architectural elements: deep overhanging eaves, spider leg post and beam supports, and prominent screen vent projecting from the fascia.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>The subject property embodies the distinctive characteristics of the work of renowned sculptor Merrell Gage. In particular, the artist was known for his faithful representations of the human face as demonstrated in the many likenesses of Abraham Lincoln Gage sculpted throughout the artist’s life. Each of the eight members of the movie industry represented in bronze bas-relief on the subject marble monument – particularly their three dimensional-appearing faces – is rendered in Gage’s distinctive style and method of design and assembly (construction).</p>
<p>A.4 Represents a notable work of a person included on the City’s List of Master Architects or possesses high artistic or aesthetic value</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Richard Neutra is a world renowned master architect known as the modernist’s Modernist. Neutra’s residential designs from the late 1920s until his death in 1970 greatly influenced several generations of architects, particularly in Southern California where the majority of his work resides. Due to substantial alterations and demolitions, only a handful of his dwellings remain that are expansive and retain a high level of physical integrity. Following its recent rehabilitation, the Kronish Residence is one such example – and the only remaining Neutra-designed dwelling in Beverly Hills. It is a notable work that fully illustrates Neutra’s architectural philosophy.</p> <p>The property also satisfies this criterion for its aesthetic value as it so</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>Though Merrell Gage is not included in the City’s List of Master Architects, the property does satisfy this criterion under artistic and aesthetic value. The monument fully expresses a particular concept of design which is evident in its overall artistic expression, materials, composition, form, and method of assembly.</p> <p>From an artistic perspective, it also physically manifests as aspect of the City’s cultural and artistic heritage in its design, materials, composition, artistry, and sculptor.</p>

Criterion	Kronish Residence	Celluloid Monument
	eloquently expresses the classic expression and features of the modernist design theories of the International Style.	
A.5 The property has yielded or has the potential to yield, information important in the prehistory or history of the Nation, State, City or community	No	No
A.6 The property is listed or has been formally determined to be eligible by the National Parks Service for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or is listed or has been formally determined eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources	No	No
B Retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and association	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>The period of significance for the subject property is 1954-1956, when the Kronish Residence and its swimming pool and pool house were completed. Following its recent rehabilitation work completed on the property, the dwelling's overall integrity is such that the property clearly conveys its historical and architectural significance. In returning the main house to its original configuration, inappropriate additions were removed, and missing or damaged fenestration and hardware elements were recreated and installed. Interior surfaces were also refinished or replaced in-kind, new terrazzo flooring poured, glazing exchanged for tempered glass, and the kitchen remodeled for contemporary use. As a result, through careful restoration and recreation of essential physical features, the integrity of the dwelling's design, materials, and workmanship is now evident. Additionally, the house is</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Yes</p> <p>The period of significance for the subject property is 1959-1960, when the commemorative monument was completed and dedicated at its current location. In comparing historic photographs with current conditions, the marble and bronze sculpture appears not to have experienced any loss of historic or physical integrity. Specifically, the subject sculpture retains integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Additionally, the monument is at its original location and setting in the landscaped triangular median between Olympic Boulevard, South Beverly and Beverwil drives. Further, the sculpture looks and feels as it did in 1960 when dedicated at a public ceremony attended by three of the honorees as numerous local dignitaries.</p>

Criterion	Kronish Residence	Celluloid Monument
	at its original location, remains a single-family residence, and its overall setting of lush landscaping has been reestablished. Further, the residence looks and feels like the masterwork of famed modernist architect Richard Neutra that it was 60 years ago.	
C Is of significant architectural value to the community, beyond its simple market value, and its designation as a Landmark is reasonable, appropriate, and necessary to promote, protect, and further the goals and purpose of the Ordinance	Yes Because of the property's architectural merit, key design features, and association with master architect Richard Neutra, the site is considered to have significant historic value to the local community.	Yes Because of the subject property's historic and artistic merit, aesthetic values, and association with key members of the motion picture industry important to the independence of Beverly Hills, the site is considered to have significant historic value to the local community.

Both properties meet the necessary requirements for local landmark designation. With City Council designation, the two properties would be placed on the Local Register of Historic Properties in the order of the years which they were originally constructed:

Property Name	Proposed Local Landmark Designation
The Kronish Residence, 1954	No. 28
The Celluloid Monument, 1960	No. 29

Given the ongoing need of property owners to adapt to changing needs, it is important to consider the impact of any historic registry listings on the functional activities of properties. The effect of listing onto the City's Historic Register of Historic Properties is not intended to freeze a property in time without any opportunity for future adaptations, but rather to provide reasonable guidelines to inform any future alterations, additions and/or adaptations in a way that allows for change without destroying historic integrity.

In order to allow historic properties to be adapted to modern needs, the Secretary of the Interior's (SOI) Standards for Rehabilitation are used as criteria to review changes to historic

properties. The SOI Standards have purposefully been crafted to allow flexibility for historic buildings to be adapted over time to meet changing needs in a way that allows ongoing functionality of historic buildings without unnecessarily destroying historic fabric. There are ten guiding Standards to be applied in the rehabilitation of historic properties. The SOI Standards for Rehabilitation assume that at least some repair or alteration of a historic building will be needed over time in order to provide for efficient contemporary use; however, these repairs and alterations must not damage or destroy original materials, features or finishes that are important in defining the historic character of the resource. The Standards allow for modernization to landmarks and are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

As local historic landmarks, the properties would be subject to additional historic review and would be subject to approval and issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness¹ (pursuant to BHMC §10-3-3219) to ensure that the SOI Standards are followed and to ensure that future alterations are appropriate for the historic structure.

The Celluloid Monument is a City-owned public art piece located in the public right-of-way. The Public Works Department was consulted and indicated that designation of this existing site would not have any impact on their operations. Additionally, the Fine Arts Commission was informed of the potential landmark designation and they indicated their support.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY

Designation of the two properties as local historic landmarks is consistent with the objectives, principles, and standards of the General Plan, including General Plan Policy “HP 1.3 – Promote National, State, and Local Designation of Historic Resources,” which encourages designation of local Landmarks.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

Designation of the two properties as local historic landmarks was assessed in accordance with the authority and criteria contained in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State CEQA Guidelines, and the environmental regulations of the City. It has been determined that the landmark designations and the inclusion of the two properties would not have a significant environmental impact and are exempt from CEQA pursuant to Sections 15061(b)(3), 15308, and 15331 of Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations. It can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that designation will have a significant effect on the environment, as no specific development is authorized by the resolutions, and any future development would require separate environmental analysis when the details of such proposals are known. Further, the landmark designation of the properties is an action of the City to protect and preserve historic resources.

¹ A Certificate of Appropriateness is a certificate issued to approve alteration, restoration, construction, removal, relocation in whole or in part, or demolition of a designated landmark or property within a historic district (BHMC §10-3-3202).

PUBLIC COMMENT

As required by the City’s Historic Preservation Ordinance, notice of the public hearing for consideration of landmark designation by City Council was provided to the property owners’ representative for the Kronish Residence and to the City Manager’s Office for Celluloid Monument (City-owned property). As of the writing of this agenda report, no public comments have been received.

Notice of the Cultural Heritage Commission’s public hearings to consider the properties for landmark nomination was also provided to the above-mentioned owners. At the January 14, 2015 CHC meeting, Chris Shanley, Senior Associate with Marmol Radziner, the architecture firm that completed the recent renovation on the property and serves as the owners’ representative, indicated their client’s support of the landmark designation. During public comment, Adrian Scott Fine, Director of Advocacy with the LA Conservancy, voiced the Conservancy’s full support of the landmarking for this important piece of Modern architecture.

FISCAL IMPACT

Designating a property as a Local Landmark deems it eligible for historic preservation incentives at the local level. This includes general eligibility to apply for a Mills Act contract², which might result in a fiscal impact by way of reduced property tax revenue to the City and the Beverly Hills Unified School District, if such a contract is approved by the City Council in the future. The cumulative fiscal impact of the Mills Act program was considered by the City Council when they reviewed and approved a three-year extension of the Pilot Mills Act Program through the end of 2016. Any awarding of contracts to the subject properties would need to fall within the approved limits of the current Mills Act program. However, as a public property, Celluloid Monument would not be eligible for such incentives. No further fiscal impact is anticipated to result from the landmark designation of the properties.

Susan Healy Keene, AICP
Director of Community Development


Approved By _____

² Subject to minimum program requirements, such as a \$7.5 M cap on the tax assessed value of participating properties (with a possible exemption for exceptional significance).